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Art of making book plates

Photographs: Julianna Chau / Hong Kong iMail
Artist Mui Chong-ki, left, shows to students of Caritas Chong YuetMing Prevocational School how to roll a book plate through the press

Expert gives practical

lessons on methods to

improve students' skills

By Julianna Chau

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STUDENTS of Caritas Chong Yuet Ming Prevocational School had anopportunity to learn more about ex-libris when they visited the HongKong Museum of Art recently.

Ex-libris is a Latin word meaning ``from the books of . . ." or ``from the library of . . .". It stands for book plate. Ex-libris isa piece of decorated paper which is stuck in the front of a book andon which the owner's name is printed or written.

During the visit, artist Mui Chong-ki taught the students about thehistory of book plates and how to make them using different methodsand materials. He also showed them some samples of book plates fromall over the world.

Teacher Mak Wah-yui, who led the students, said: "Ex-libris making is what I am teaching the students right now. Knowing that Mui was holding a demonstration here, I took the students along with me to widen their knowledge on the subject and also to show them some methods of making it. Some of the methods are not feasible at school because of lack of resources."

Student Jerry Ho Wai-kei said he enjoyed making book plates.

He has already found that the most difficult part of the work is in doing the carving of curves on the woodblock. He would like to try some of Mui's methods later on.

"I think what we do now is quite different from what people did in old times, because we can design our own patterns or put our favourite characters on it," Jerry said.

Students had brought along some of their creations and asked Mui for his expert comments.

"I think the better way for them to improve their skills is to form a club first, then get in touch with outside parties in order to have more chances to expose their works, to take part in more activities and receive more news about book plates," Mui said.

"And while joining a competition, they must remember to follow the regulations carefully, like the size or the number of colours they are allowed to use."

Another student Lo Chi-sum said, "If I have the time and some nice pieces of work, I will give them to my friends. I think this is very special."

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